

1502/135.

AN
E L E G Y
WRITTEN AMONG THE
RUINS OF AN ABBEY.

By the AUTHOR of the NUN.

THE SECOND EDITION.

W. Jerningham.



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall.
MDCCLXV.

[Price Six Pence.]

1247
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[3]

A N

E L E G Y.

WHERE sighs the Zephyr to yon lonely Tree,
A solemn Grove its leafy Mantle spread:
Where bend yon mould'ring Turrets o'er the Sea,
A venerable Dome once rear'd its Head.

The solemn Grove, the venerable Dome,
Were erst frequented by a num'rous Train,
Ev'n chaste as they who Dian's Mountain roam,
But not subjected to her gentle Reign:

A 2

Far

Far other Goddess did this Train obey,
 Far other Temples, other Altars rais'd,
 Far other Meaning breath'd their Choral Lay,
 Far other Incense on their Altars blaz'd:

Veil'd Superstition wak'd her magic Sound,
 Bad Albion's Sons forsake the splendid Court,
 Forsake Amusement's variegated Round,
 And to her sable Standard here resort:

Alas! obsequious to her stern Command,
 A fullen-pensive Brotherhood they came,
 Refus'd to trace the Paths by Nature plan'd,
 And raz'd from Glory's Page their ancient Name.

Nor

Nor these alone were found incloister'd here,
 Here also dwelt the simple-minded Swain,
 Who wrapt in Sloth dream'd out the lazy Year,
 ' While Industry sat weeping on the Plain.'

The many Temples rising fair to view,
 Which tow'ring Superstition call'd her own,
 With Hand unerring radiant Truth o'erthrew,
 And snatch'd th' Impostor from her tinsel'd Throne:

On yon Dust-level'd Spire the crafty Maid,
 With Indignation brooding in her Breast
 Sits gloomily ---- Her Vot'ries all are fled,
 Her Lamps extinguish'd, and her Rites suppress'd:

Within

Within her Hand a vacant String she holds
 That once connected many a hallow'd Bead:
 The blotted Scroll the other Hand unfolds,
 Contains the Maxims of her flighted Creed:

Couch'd at her Feet, behold a mould'ring Shrine
 (Of various Relics once the dread Abode)
 Where runs the Spider o'er his treach'rous Line,
 Where lurks the Beetle, and the loathsome Toad:

On Darknefs' wing now fails the midnight Hour,
 When for the grateful Sound of choral Pray'r,
 The shrieking Owl from yon disparted Tow'r,
 With Notes of Horror wakes her trembling Ear.

Of

Of human Grandeur mark the fleeting Day,
 How frail each Purpose, and each Wish how vain!
 The strong-built Domes, the cloister'd Fanes decay,
 And Ruin hovers round the desert Scene.

The Path that leads to yonder shatter'd Pile
 Is now perplex'd with many a fordid Brier :
 No Crowd is seen within the sacred Isle,
 The Sabbath mourns its long-deserted Quire.

The golden Crozier blended with the Dust
 In horrid Folds the Serpent clasps around :
 The pow'rful Image, and the fainted Bust,
 Defam'd, unhallow'd, press the weedy Ground.

Not distant far, her gold-encircled Tow'r
Th' inviolable Dome majestic rear'd,
 On whose dread Altar breath'd some hidden Pow'r,
 By Terror guarded, and by Kings rever'd:

To which Afylum ev'n th' Affassin came,
 (His Hand audacious still imbrued with Gore)
 The Boon of full Impunity to claim,
 While feeble Justice wept her baffled Lore.

So Truth at length dissolv'd the mental Chain,
 And banish'd Error from th' enlighten'd Shore:
 So clos'd at length the busy-acted Scene,
 The Curtain drop'd, and Folly's Mask was o'er.

Then

Then gladsome *Ceres* rais'd her drooping Head,
 (While yellow Harvests gilt the smiling Plain)
 Beheld a youthful Band around her spread,
 With Sickles arm'd to reap the bearded Grain.

The Warrior then beneath the trailing Vest,
 The peaceful Cassock, or the drowsy Cowl,
 No longer quench'd the Flame within his Breast,
 Or lull'd the Purpose of his daring Soul :

But rush'd undaunted to the doubtful War,
 Pursued where Glory led the radiant Way,
 Till Neptune rising on his coral Car,
 Resign'd his wat'ry World to *Britain's* Sway.

The Virgin Fair by venal Guardians doom'd,
 By Error prompted, or subdued by Force,
 No more in Cloisters drear their Days consum'd :
 Like Flow'rets strew'd around the senseless Corse.

Triumphant *Hymen* hail'd the blissful Hour,
 And saw a white-rob'd social Train approach,
 For whom the Pleasures dress'd the happy Bow'r,
 And scatter'd Roses o'er the destin'd Couch.

Still other Blessings from this Change appear'd,
 No injur'd Family did then behold
 On loit'ring Monks its native Wealth confer'd,
 Nor spacious Altars cover'd with its Gold.

Full many trod that crooked Path to Fame,
 Yet from her Hand receiv'd no lasting Meed,
 She from her Annals rends their fading Name,
 And gives to Infamy the worthless Deed :

But Vengeance some pursued with dire Disgrace,
 Pursued beyond the Circle of its Sphere,
 Ev'n to the Cemetery's dark Recess,
 Nor spar'd them sleeping on the peaceful Bier :

Beside the spreading of that sombrous Yew,
 Where yawns with hideous Chasm the vaulted Cave,
 Presenting to the fix'd astonish'd View,
 The Profanation of a rifled Grave :

The large-endowing *Rufus* lay inurn'd
 With many a sculptur'd Image on his Shrine,
 That smit with Sorrow o'er his Ashes mourn'd,
 The Sister-Graces and the tuneful Nine.

Imprinted on Tradition's storied Leaf
 Is found (to this sepulchral Spot confin'd)
 A Terror-breathing Tale that wins Belief,
 And oft repeated by the neighb'ring Hind !

From where yon Mountain shades the dreary Plain,
 Attracted by the Scent of human Blood,
 A Troop of Wolves voracious scour'd amain,
 And at this Charnel Vault requir'd their Food :

When,

When, horrid to relate! they burst the Tomb,
And swift descending to the deepest Shade,
Up-tore the shrouded Tenant from its Womb,
And o'er the mangled Corse relentless prey'd.

The paly Stars with dim reluctant Light,
Like Tapers glimmer'd on their Orgies foul,
While gliding Spectres scream'd with wild Affright,
Re-echo'd loud by their tremendous Howl.

Ah! what avail'd the solemn-moving Herse?
The fabled-mantled Cars, the Fun'ral Throng?
Grav'd on his Monument the soothing Verse?
The Priests, the Torches, and the choral Song?

Misjudging

Misjudging Wretch ! while thou with Hand profuse,
Thy Treasures on this Mansion didst entail,
And pour down Riches on the vow'd Recluse,
Thine Orphan Babes partook a scanty Meal :

Thy widow'd Fair, her Cheek bedew'd with Tears,
Approach'd with suppliant Knee the Cloister-Gate,
There oft disclos'd in vain, her poignant Cares,
Returning still to weep her hapless Fate.

F I N I S.



